

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2015

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Administrator McCarthy:

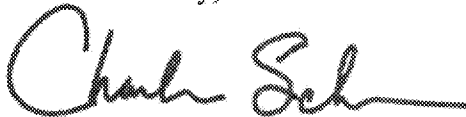
I write to urge the Environmental Protection Agency to Issue an Unilateral Administrative Order (UAO) to the Department of Defense (DOD) and Northrop Grumman under the authority the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. The U.S. Navy operated a Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve in Bethpage beginning in the 1930s, which has resulted in at least 2 hazardous plumes containing chemicals classified as carcinogens. Since the Navy and Northrop Grumman failed to reach a Record of Decision (ROD) through an Order of Consent, I urge the EPA to issue an UAO with enforceable timelines to bring all parties together to move the process forward.

Contamination concerns were first identified in 1976. The plume has since spread and is currently threatening over 20 additional public drinking wells that serve over 250,000 Nassau County residents in Bethpage, Massapequa, South Farmingdale and Wantagh Districts. New hot spots have been found between Bethpage Water District Plant 6 and the GM 75 hotspot. In addition, elevated levels of a potential carcinogen, trichloroethylene (TCE), have been found in the groundwater 1,700 feet away from a Bethpage drinking water well. TCE is an industrial solvent and was used at the former defense plant in Bethpage, which was operated by Northrop Grumman and the U.S. Navy.

In November, NYSDEC notified Northrop Grumman that the Department expects them to participate with the Navy in the cleanup process within the Bethpage plume. NYSDEC urged Northrop Grumman to sign an order of consent to undertake this work. The EPA has indicated that if the order of consent was not signed within 30 days that the agency would consider issuing an administrative order to Northrop Grumman. Currently, 90 days have since passed and the administrative order has not yet been issued.

Again, I urge the EPA to issue a Unilateral Administrative Order to the Department of Defense's (DOD) and Northrop Grumman to ensure that the remediation of the impacted area moves forward. I thank you for your attention to this important request and look forward to working with your agency to address this most important issue for numerous communities across Long Island.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

